

White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*)

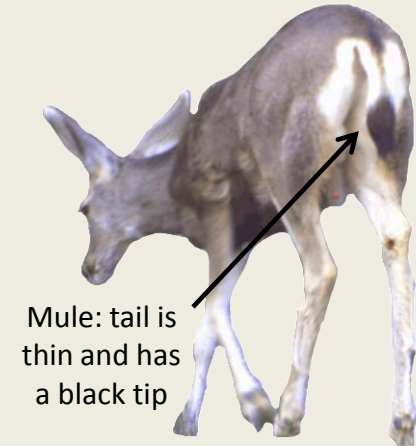
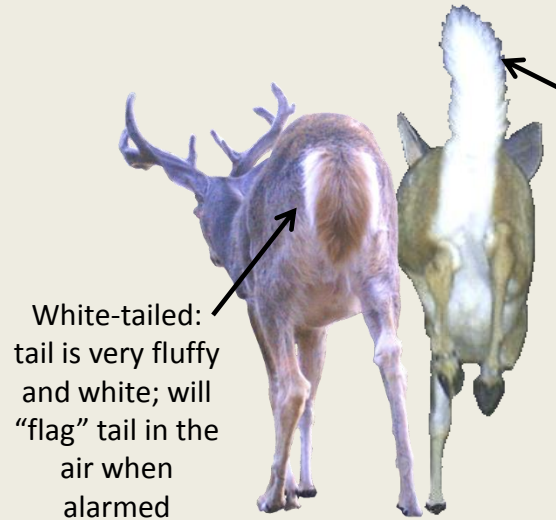
vs.

Mule Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*)

Primary Identifying Features:

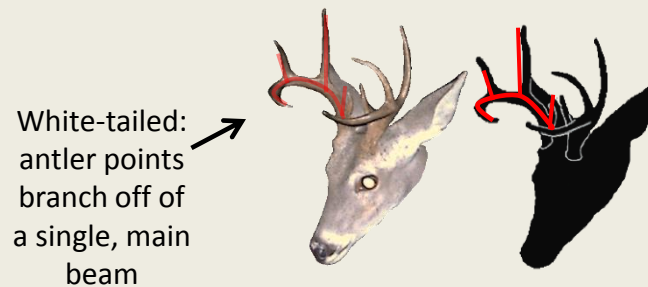
Tail

Tail is the most distinct and common feature used to differentiate White-tailed and Mule deer



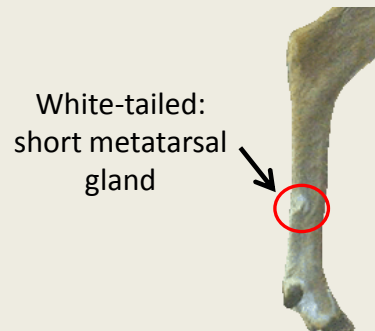
Antler Shape

In some seasons, antler shape can be easily used to distinguish species of male deer

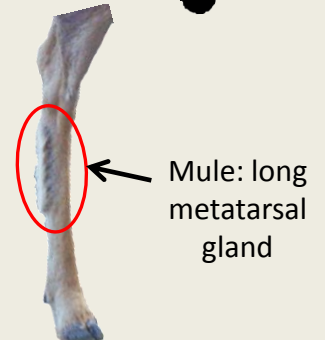


Metatarsal Glands

Located on the outside of the hind leg, the length of this gland varies between species



Mule: antlers have two main beams, which fork evenly as they grow



White-tailed Deer
(Odocoileus virginianus)

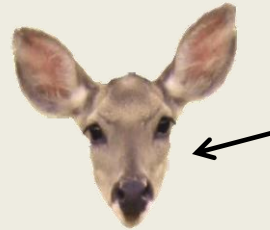
vs.

Mule Deer
(Odocoileus hemionus)

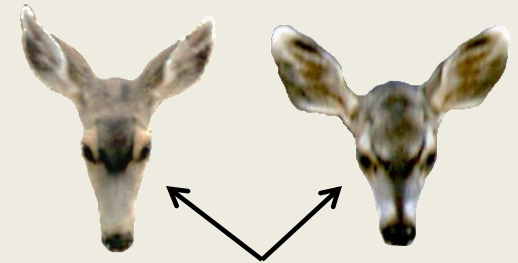
**Secondary
Identifying Features:**

**Facial
Coloration**

While these characteristics are not always expressed, and are often variable, they can be used to **confirm** an identification by primary features



White-tailed: may have white eye-ring, nose band, and chin



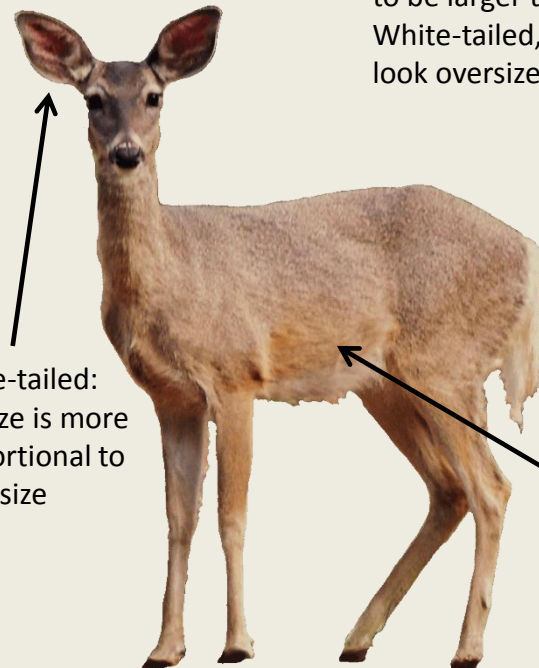
Mule: often have a dark facemask between the eyes, which varies in shape and size

Fur Texture

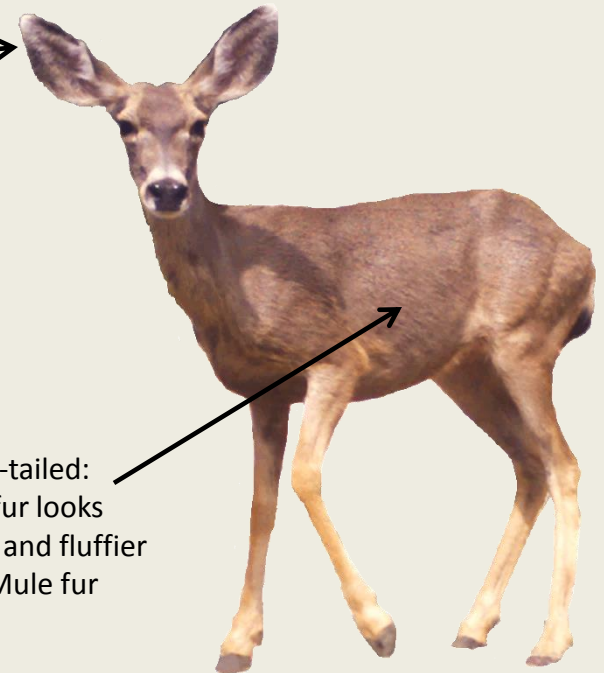
There are subtle differences in the appearance of fur texture between species, which becomes apparent in a side-by-side comparison

Ear Size

Ear size is slightly variable between species



White-tailed: ear size is more proportional to head size



White-tailed: body fur looks softer and fluffier than Mule fur

Note: These two species can interbreed to produce hybrids

Black-tailed Jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*)

vs.

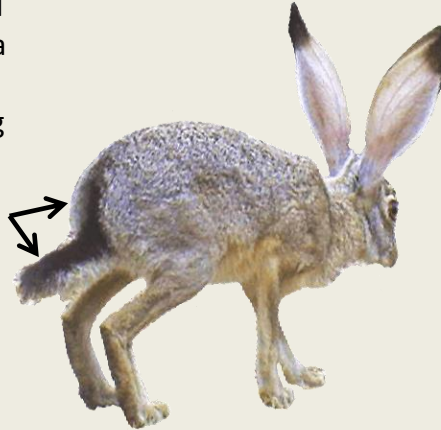
Antelope Jackrabbit (*Lepus alleli*)

Primary Identifying Features:

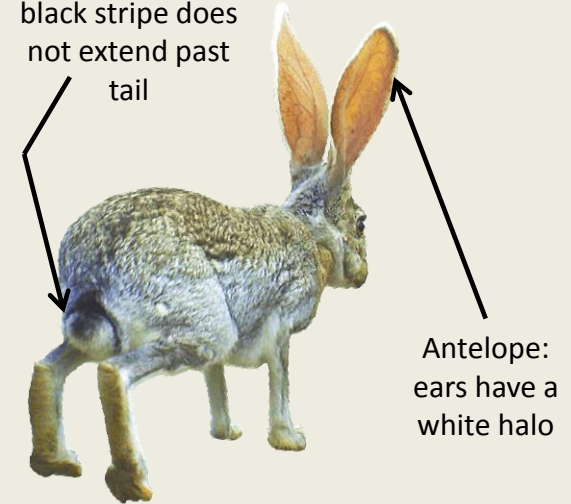
Tail

Tail size and stripe length
are the easiest way to
identify a fleeing
jackrabbit

Black-tailed: tail
is long and has a
distinct black
stripe extending
from the tip of
the tail, up the
rump



Antelope: tail is
quite short and
black stripe does
not extend past
tail

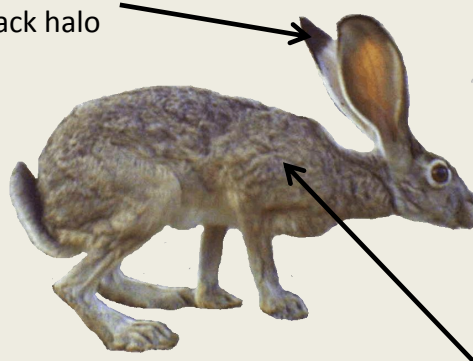


Coloring

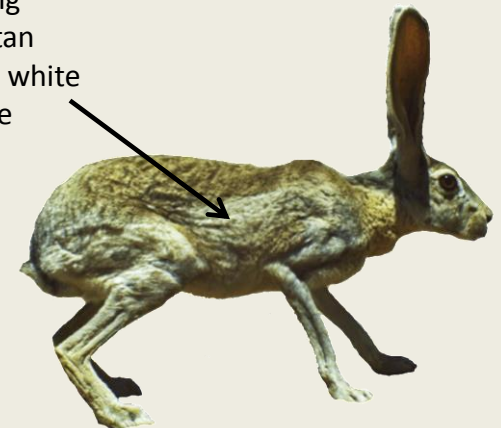
Ear Tips

Ear tips and
edges have
distinguishable
color patterns

Black-tailed:
ears are tipped
with black and
have a black halo



Antelope: has
contrasting
brownish-tan
upperside and white
underside



Sidebody

General fur coloration
varies between these two
species and can be seen
well on the sidebody

Black-tailed: body
fur is gray-brown
throughout

**Hooded Skunk
(Mephitis macroura)**

vs.

**Striped Skunk
(Mephitis mephitis)**

vs.

**Hog-nosed Skunk
(Conepatus leuconotus)**

**Primary Identifying
Features:**

Color Morphs

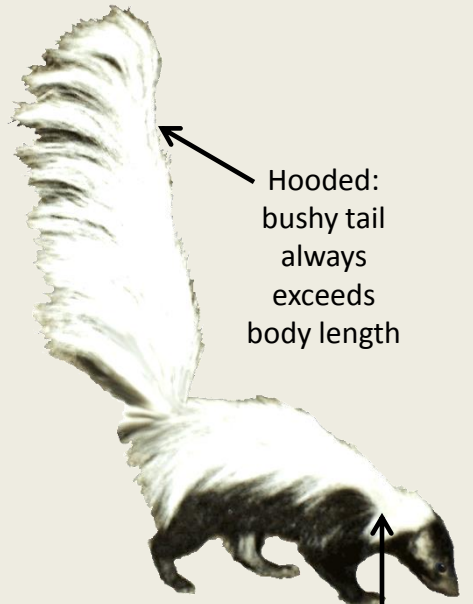
Although coloring does vary within species, there are recognizable patterns

Tail Length

Tail to body ratio is important to consider when distinguishing between species

Body Shape

Overall body shape and size can reveal much about a skunk's identity, as well



Hooded: bushy tail always exceeds body length

Hooded: longer hair behind head creates a "hood"

Hooded: coloration highly variable; white markings may be present on face, but will not connect to body stripe

Striped: tail length equal to or shorter than body length



Striped: thin white stripe present between ears and eyes; stripe connects to a larger white stripe down the back, which forks near the tail

Striped: has the largest body and greatest total length of the **four** Sonoran Desert skunks

Hog-nosed: body is colored solid black on bottom and solid white on top

Hog-nosed: tail is all white, and equal to or shorter than body length



Hog-nosed: legs are short and thick with downward curving claws; snout is long, hairless, and flat-ended

Hooded Skunk
(*Mephitis macroura*)



Striped Skunk
(*Mephitis mephitis*)



Hog-nosed Skunk
(*Conepatus leuconotus*)



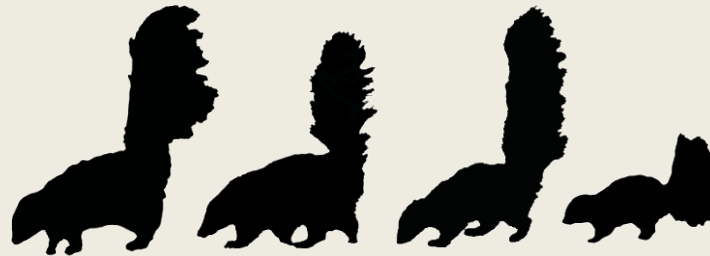
VS.

Spotted Skunk
(*Spilogale gracilis*)

Spotted: body has
several stripes
along back and
sides; white dot
present between
the eyes



Spotted: tail is
relatively short
and tipped in
white



Skunk Size and Body Ratio Comparison
From left to right: Striped, Hog-nosed, Hooded, Spotted

**Primary Identifying
Features:**

Color Morphs

Unique color
pattern makes it
easy to distinguish
the Spotted skunk
from the other
three species

Tail Length

Tail length is
noticeably
shorter than
body length

Body Shape

Of the four skunks,
the Spotted has
the smallest body
and shortest total
length